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Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance: comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/16. It is focused on key initiatives undertaken by all major stakeholders in support of the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent and provides recommendations intended to sustain and capitalize on the momentum generated by the launch of the Decade.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/16. It is focused on the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent, taking into account information and views provided by States, human rights bodies, mechanisms and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, regional organizations, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations, including organizations of people of African descent.

2. The Decade, which began on 1 January 2015 and will end on 31 December 2024, was proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/237, with the theme "People of African descent: recognition, justice and development". By its resolution 69/16, the Assembly adopted a programme of activities for the implementation of the Decade.

3. The main objective of the Decade is to promote respect, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of people of African descent. The General Assembly also identified the following specific objectives:

(a) To strengthen national, regional and international action and cooperation in relation to the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights by people of African descent and their full and equal participation in all aspects of society;

(b) To promote a greater knowledge of and respect for the diverse heritage, culture and contribution of people of African descent to the development of societies;

(c) To adopt and strengthen national, regional and international legal frameworks in accordance with the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and to ensure their full and effective implementation.

4. In addition to those objectives, the General Assembly recommended activities to be carried out, in particular by Member States. In the programme of activities, relevant United Nations programmes, funds, specialized agencies and other bodies, in particular the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), regional organizations, financial and development institutions, national human rights institutions and civil society are requested to take specific action.

5. The General Assembly appointed the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to act as coordinator of the Decade in order to follow up on the implementation of activities in the framework of the Decade. The programme of activities sets out recommendations for the coordinator and OHCHR, including the launch of a campaign to raise awareness of the contributions and situation of human rights of people of African descent, the strengthening of the fellowship programme for people of African descent during the Decade and the inclusion of a section on the Decade in the anti-discrimination database.

6. As at 30 June 2015, information for the present report had been received from Argentina, Colombia, Cuba, Italy, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the

United States of America, as well as from the Department of Public Information, UNESCO, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance and the Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons of African Descent and against Racial Discrimination of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights had also provided information, as had the ombudsmen of Colombia and Ecuador. Numerous civil society organizations had also provided input.

7. The report is structured in line with the objectives of the Decade and is based on information received from the above-mentioned stakeholders.

II. Implementation of the objectives and activities of the International Decade for People of African Descent

A. Promote respect, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of people of African descent

8. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance reported continuing discrimination against people of African descent in many European countries. In its annual report for 2014,[1] it noted reasons ranging from traditional racist stereotypes, often based on age-old images of black people during the era of colonialism and slavery, to perceptions of Africans as unwanted economic migrants. It reported that people of African descent continued to live disproportionally often in socially deprived residential areas, were more frequently stopped and searched by the police and had less favourable health-care outcomes than white populations. It also reported on the issue of the reproduction of stereotypical images of black people in cultural life, noting that the continuing public discussion about how to address the issue had shown very strong racist undertones among some commentators, which, according to it, revealed the true extent of the problem.

9. It is stated in the Commission's report that the number of refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants entering Europe continues to increase, owing to, among other things, continuing conflicts, insecurity and poverty. Many migrants seek to cross the Mediterranean Sea to reach the shores of Europe. The continuing economic and financial crisis in Europe has led to a growing fear among many citizens of hardening competition among newly arrived migrants, asylum seekers and refugees for jobs, affordable housing, reduced social services and welfare benefits. Increasingly, the various groups of migrants are seen not as contributing to enriching European societies, but as a threat to accustomed standards of wealth and social stability. Migrants are often particularly badly affected by the economic crisis, owing to pre-existing high levels of social exclusion, including lower levels of education, that make readjustment in a contracting labour market more difficult. Consequently, migrants are often also victimized because of their now-reduced social status, leading to multiple forms of discrimination. The Commission also stated that, while discussion of migration and the challenges that it posed was

[1] Available from www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/Annual_Reports/Annual%20report%202014.pdf.

necessary and legitimate, it was often used and exploited as a topic for populist politics and election campaigning.

10. Global Migration Policy Associates reported that a large proportion of migrants and descendants of migrants worldwide were people of African descent. Migrants often faced xenophobic and racist treatment in their countries of residence. For migrants of African descent, the discrimination and obstacles to social inclusion might be compounded by language barriers and risks of abusive treatment in employment, especially for those in irregular situations. It mentioned that, since the beginning of 2015, civil society groups had further mobilized in Europe and North Africa to assure safety, access to international protection and decent treatment for Africans who had left their countries owing to warfare, violations of human rights and/or the absence of conditions for a decent life. Concerns had been heightened by the tragic deaths of refugees and migrants from Africa and the Middle East crossing the Mediterranean Sea in the first months of 2015. Significant numbers of "survival migrants" and refugees from sub-Saharan Africa were attempting perilous crossings of North African deserts and the Mediterranean Sea in search of safe haven in Europe. It stressed the urgent need to provide access to protection and adequate humanitarian relief and to ensure the protection of the human rights of arriving migrants and refugees, a large number of whom were from Africa.

11. The Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons of African Descent and against Racial Discrimination of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights reported on her activities, including the preparation of a thematic study on issues relating to race and the criminal justice system in the United States of America in which she would focus on, in particular, the disproportionate use of force by the police and review the applicable international human rights standards, as well as information collected by the Commission in the framework of public hearings and recent emblematic cases. The report would also include recommendations to the United States on how to best address the existing challenges with regard to racial discrimination in the criminal justice system.

12. Owing to the growing concern over the treatment of African Americans by the United States criminal justice system and law enforcement authorities, the Commission has convened hearings on the issues. For example, on 16 March 2015, at the request of the Government, the Commission organized a hearing centred on the issue of race and the United States criminal justice system. Representatives of the Government noted the importance of that hearing, given the fiftieth anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery marches, and presented information on efforts to tackle racial discrimination in the criminal justice system, including a presidential task force on twenty-first-century policing, and on monitoring and litigation mechanisms aimed at eliminating such discrimination. The civil society organizations present at the hearings highlighted the disproportionate impact of the criminal justice system on African-American and Latino populations, in particular in the context of the so-called "broken windows" policy, pretrial detention, bail determinations and sentencing. The Commission reiterated that there was a need to increase the visibility of issues of race in the United States criminal justice system and for the State to develop a prevention strategy.

13. Furthermore, on 27 October 2014, the Commission organized, on its initiative, a hearing on racism in the justice system in the United States, at which it received information from civil society organizations and the Government. The petitioners

referred in particular to programmes marked by racial profiling, such as the "stop-and-frisk" programme in New York City, and the lack of criminal accountability in cases of excessive use of force by law enforcement officers.

14. On 20 March 2015, a hearing was held on reports of killings of young people of African descent in Brazil, at which the Commission received information concerning the alarming level of violence faced by Afro-Brazilian males between 15 and 29 years of age. According to the petitioners, State security forces and military police were among the perpetrators, reflecting a manifestation of the institutional racism and discrimination in the Brazilian security and justice systems. Concerns highlighted included alleged extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances, excessive use of pretrial detention, a disproportionate number of detentions and an overrepresentation of Afro-Brazilians in the prison population.

15. Minority Rights Group reported on the situation of Dominicans of Haitian descent living in the Dominican Republic and the State's discriminatory policy towards and detention and mass expulsion of such individuals.

16. AfroMadrid held a gathering of non-governmental organizations in June 2015 in which representatives of United Nations human rights mechanisms participated. In the outcome document of the meeting, the participants expressed solidarity with African Americans over the killings in South Carolina, United States, and the deaths of thousands of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea, calling upon Member States to provide an immediate and urgent solution to those problems. They also voiced their deep concern over the deaths of young people on the streets of the Americas, in particular in Brazil and Central America.

17. The Office of the Ombudsman of Colombia reported on its work in the recognition of people of African descent as victims of the internal armed conflict and on follow-up to the implementation of Decree No. 4635 (2011) on reparations and land restitution. It noted that the armed conflict had weakened the social structure and cultural integrity of Afro-Colombians and the Raizal and Palenquero peoples. The Office was working to ensure that the rights of Afro-Colombians, as victims of the armed conflict, were adequately taken into consideration in order to lay the foundation for sustainable change in the country and to ensure the recognition of their collective land rights. The Office also indicated that it handled complaints of discrimination and ensured that the collective rights of Afro-Colombians to free, informed and prior consent were respected when making decisions relating to the use and exploitation of their lands.

1. Women and girls

18. In the programme of activities, States are to mainstream a gender perspective when designing and monitoring public policies, taking into account the specific needs and realities of women and girls of African descent, including in the area of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.

19. The United States reported on a project on women's entrepreneurship in the Americas, an initiative intended to leverage public-private partnerships to encourage inclusive economic growth in the western hemisphere. The initiative increases opportunities for women entrepreneurs to begin to enhance small and medium-sized enterprises by improving access to markets, capital, skills and capacity-building and leadership opportunities. The State Department has signed memorandums of

understanding to promote growth and entrepreneurship among such enterprises with the Governments of Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay.

20. From 29 September to 3 October 2014, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights conducted a visit to Colombia, during which it placed particular emphasis on the situation of women of African descent and received information about the barriers faced by such women in obtaining basic information from the State, including a lack of statistics disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, disability and other factors. It also received information about the impact of the armed conflict on women of African descent and on acts of physical, psychological and sexual violence committed during the conflict. The Commission recalled that the State must take into account the multiple forms of discrimination faced by women of African descent and help to facilitate their participation in policies relating to their human rights.

21. From 26 to 28 June 2015, the Network of Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women organized a meeting in Nicaragua of women leaders from the region. The participants highlighted their human rights situation and requested specific action by States regarding their limited access to education, employment and sexual and reproductive rights, as well as their heightened vulnerability to gender-based violence and insecurity.

22. Ashanti Peru reported on the multiple forms of discrimination faced by young Afro-Peruvian women and on seminars held around the country to prevent maternal mortality and to raise awareness of sexual and reproductive care.

2. Capacity-building

23. OHCHR has paid special attention to strengthening knowledge and practical expertise with regard to human rights among leaders of African descent. It was specifically requested by the General Assembly to continue and strengthen its fellowship programme for people of African descent during the Decade. The programme provides participants with an intensive learning opportunity to deepen their understanding of the United Nations human rights instruments and mechanisms, with a focus on issues of particular relevance to people of African descent. The three-week programme, held in Geneva, generally coincides with sessions of human rights mechanisms, enabling fellows to gain a better understanding of the international human rights machinery. The 10 fellows are also offered the opportunity to gain practical experience and receive direct training from experts. The programme includes briefings by agencies of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations.

24. The objective of the programme is to contribute to the creation of a new generation of activists of African descent with excellent backgrounds and practical experience that can be used by their communities and organizations. The programme also allows participants to better contribute to the protection and promotion of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of people of African descent in their countries.

25. In Colombia, to develop a national public policy to implement the Decade, OHCHR facilitated an exchange of views between sectors of civil society, in particular Afro-Colombian grass-roots representatives, and the Government. Two perspectives emerged. Government bodies and some sectors of civil society viewed

the Decade as an opportunity to give visibility to Afro-Colombians and to promote respect for their culture through a national campaign. Local social movements working on the right to land, economic, social and cultural rights and black women viewed the Decade as an opportunity to redress current disparities and structural discrimination that were the result of wrongs of history. Local movements also saw Afro-Colombians as one of the main victims of the armed conflict and of exploitation of their lands by extractive industries, which resulted in internal displacement. They requested the participation of Afro-Colombians in the peace process and that decisions affecting them should be taken with due respect to their right to free, prior and informed consent.

26. OHCHR continues its work with Governments on the formulation and development of national policies against racism, including with regard to people of African descent. Through its Regional Office for Central America, it supported national human rights institutions in the region to enhance their human rights monitoring capacity regarding people of African descent. In 2014, OHCHR worked with the national human rights institutions of El Salvador and Nicaragua to address cases of racism and racial discrimination against people of African descent and to strengthen their complaint mechanisms. It also trained more than 50 human rights officers from those institutions on how to implement intervention protocols in cases of racial discrimination. The protocols were developed by OHCHR in collaboration with the institutions and are guidelines on how to identify, register, handle and follow up on complaints of racism and racial discrimination. In June 2015, OHCHR, together with those institutions, developed an online survey to monitor the implementation of the protocols. With the information collected, OHCHR will assess the challenges encountered by the institutions in identifying, registering and dealing with cases of racial discrimination against people of African descent. In 2014, OHCHR provided technical support to the National Commission against Discrimination and the Office of the Ombudsman of Panama to develop a study on racial profiling. In 2015, OHCHR will draw up guidelines on how to prevent, identify, record and counter cases of racial profiling.

27. OHCHR has been providing anti-discrimination and gender-sensitive human rights training for public officials of the ministries of justice, health and education and the armed forces in the Plurinational State of Bolivia. The training courses are among the preventive measures taken by the Government to tackle the racism and institutional discrimination faced by indigenous peoples, people of African descent and migrants.

3. Research

28. In the programme of activities, United Nations programmes, funds and offices are to develop studies in their respective areas of competence and expertise and to report on the themes of the Decade. In that regard, OHCHR is developing a publication on putting rights into practice with regard to people of African descent and the right to development. The document will serve as a practical guide for working together with people of African descent in communities around the world to enable them to realize their right to development. Although aimed primarily at Governments and United Nations bodies, it will also be useful for other international organizations, civil society and researchers. It is aimed at raising stakeholder awareness of the existing international legal framework and the rights, historical experiences and contemporary situation of people of African descent.

Practical examples, good practices and tools will be provided to assist United Nations bodies, States and civil society to plan, design, implement and monitor relevant and adequate development programmes for realizing the rights of people of African descent.

29. In the programme of activities, States are to design, implement and enforce effective measures to eliminate racial profiling. Police, security, immigration and detention officials make use of racial and ethnic profiling in different and pernicious ways, whether unconsciously or deliberately. Racial profiling can result in discriminatory decision-making by individual law enforcement officers or in law enforcement policies and practices that have a disproportionate impact on specific groups without any legitimate law enforcement purpose. It is often the result of deeply ingrained beliefs in entire institutions and society. To assist Member States in their efforts, OHCHR is developing a practical guide to counter racial profiling that will provide specific recommendations addressed to law enforcement officials to prevent and combat the practice.

30. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance dedicated his thematic report for 2015 to racial profiling (A/HRC/29/46). He stressed that the practice constituted a violation of the rights of the targeted groups or individuals because of its fundamentally discriminatory nature and because it exacerbated discrimination already suffered as a result of ethnic origin or minority status. He highlighted international, regional and national measures adopted to combat and prohibit racial profiling and called for legislative measures to counter discrimination and racism by law enforcement agencies. Furthermore, he called for States to gather law enforcement data, including statistics disaggregated by ethnicity and race, which were essential to proving the existence and extent of racial profiling.

31. As requested by the General Assembly, OHCHR created a new section in its database on practical means to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (anti-discrimination database)[2] focused on the objectives of the Decade. It includes news relating to the Decade, relevant information and documents and useful links.

32. UNESCO reported that it was contributing to the implementation of the Decade through two major programmes: the Slave Route Project, launched in 1994 to advance the understanding and remembrance of slavery and its consequences on modern history, and the *General History of Africa*, a collection of scientific publications launched in 1964 to address biased discourses on Africa and its history and highlight the contribution of African cultures and civilizations to the general progress of humanity.

33. At its meeting held in Mexico City in November 2014, the International Scientific Committee of the Slave Route Project discussed activities that could make a substantial and specific contribution to the Decade.

34. UNESCO has developed, on the occasion of the Decade, a 10-year agenda (2015-2024) to provide useful information on the issues addressed by the Decade and important historic dates relating to people of African descent. Through a

[2] See http://adsdatabase.ohchr.org/SitePages/Anti-discrimination%20database.aspx.

partnership with OHCHR, the agenda will be published in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

35. UNESCO is finalizing a publication that will contain an overview of available knowledge on the slave trade and slavery as a contribution to the Decade.

36. Progress has also been made by UNESCO in implementing the second phase of the *General History of Africa*, which consists of developing pedagogic material for formal and informal education and a ninth volume to update the collection. The pedagogic content developed by the drafting teams for African schools includes curricula outlines, teachers' guides and textbooks for the age groups (10-12 years, 13-16 years and 17-19 years).

B. Promote a greater knowledge of and respect for the diverse heritage, culture and contribution of people of African descent to the development of societies

37. In the programme of activities, States and the international community are called upon to celebrate the launch of the Decade. OHCHR, the Department of Public Information and the Office of the President of the General Assembly facilitated the launch through several events. On 9 December 2014, a public reading of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was held at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, New York City, to commemorate Human Rights Day (10 December).

38. The Decade was officially launched on Human Rights Day at Headquarters. Representatives of Member States, the United Nations, the four Durban follow-up mechanisms and civil society, including former fellows of the OHCHR fellowship programme, attended the launch. Speakers included the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services of South Africa, the Minister of the Secretariat for the Promotion of Policies on Racial Equality of Brazil and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy. Representatives of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of Complementary Standards also participated in the event, as did the group of independent eminent experts on the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

39. Events also included a press conference and meetings with civil society and delegations before and after the launch. The event was widely promoted by OHCHR and the Department of Public Information through various communications channels, including digital, audiovisual, webcast, print and social media platforms.

40. In Geneva, the permanent missions of Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Jamaica and the United States, together with OHCHR and the African Union, co-hosted an event on 16 December 2014 to celebrate the launch.

41. The Department of Public Information provided coverage of several other events relevant to the objectives of the Decade, including high-level meetings on Africa on the margins of the general debate of the sixty-ninth session of the General

Assembly and the celebration of Africa Day (25 May). During the reporting period, the Department issued 14 press releases (8 in English and 6 in French) on matters relating to the Decade.

42. On 22 April 2015, the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States celebrated the beginning of the Decade during a special meeting in which experts from countries of the region presented their vision and strategies with regard to how the commemoration could contribute to the advancement of people of African descent in the Americas. In June 2014, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States adopted a resolution in which countries reaffirmed the importance of the full and equal participation of people of African descent in all aspects of political, economic, social and cultural life in the countries of the Americas.

43. On 20 March 2015, to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, OHCHR organized a panel discussion during the twenty-eighth session of the Human Rights Council entitled "Learning from historical tragedies to combat racial discrimination today", in which the panellists analysed the linkages between past and contemporary forms of racism. The panel featured the Minister of Justice of France, the Chair of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience and representatives of the Zeeland Archives in the Netherlands and UNESCO.

44. On 21 March 2015, at the request of Afro-Panamanian organizations, OHCHR, through its Regional Office for Central America, together with the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Panama, supported the launch of the Decade during the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

45. The Department of Public Information, in cooperation with OHCHR, produced promotional materials to observe the Decade, including posters in English, French and Spanish and commemorative pins featuring the Decade's logo. They were distributed through United Nations information centres and at events at Headquarters, including on Human Rights Day and upon the unveiling of the permanent memorial in honour of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. The Department will launch a brochure with the text of the programme of activities in late 2015.

46. The Department, together with OHCHR, produced two *UN in Action* video stories in the six official languages for the Decade. The first piece, *Descendants of Slaves: Ancestral Land*, released in April 2015, tells the story of descendants of slaves — the Gullah Geechee people — who live in South Carolina and Georgia, United States. The second item, *Brazil: The Story of Slavery*, released in July 2015, is about the Quilombolas, who are Afro-Brazilian descendants of slaves fighting for land rights. Edited versions will be produced for other United Nations television products, including *UN Stories* and *21st Century*.

47. The April 2015 issue of the Department's *Africa Renewal* magazine contained an interview with the President of the General Assembly on the historical importance of the Decade, accompanied by a feature story exploring the lives of people of African descent who had moved from the United States and settled in Ghana.

48. OHCHR and United Nations information centres engaged with academic institutions, government agencies, civil society and the general public in promoting the objectives of the Decade. In June 2015, OHCHR participated in an inaugural

summit of black government leaders in Canada, convened by the Government and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, during which it presented the programme of activities. The roles and activities foreseen for Governments, the United Nations system, civil society and other relevant stakeholders were also outlined. The leaders focused on the role of Governments, specifically politicians and elected officials, in implementing the programme. They also agreed to maintain a special focus on young people of African descent. A number of follow-up initiatives are foreseen in Canada at various levels, with some already under way, including planning for a second such summit in 2016.

49. In Brazil, the Government launched the Decade with the participation of government officials, diplomats and many civil society representatives, especially leaders of African descent, representatives of non-governmental organizations, academics and media representatives. OHCHR was also represented at the opening ceremony. The launch was organized by the Secretariat for the Promotion of Policies on Racial Equality and the United Nations Resident Coordinator. The event was held in the framework of the eighth Latinidades festival, an annual event intended to highlight the experiences of black women from Latin America.

50. In the Congo, the United Nations Information Centre in Brazzaville carried out an interactive session on the Decade with government officials, university students and media representatives in July 2015.

51. The United Nations Information Centre in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, hosted a public exhibition, entitled "Forever free", at the Museum of Justice in the city of Niterói from March to April 2015.

52. The United Nations in Georgia and Universal Peace Federation Georgia organized an event entitled "Days of Africa in Georgia" from 27 April to 8 May 2015. Activities included student seminars, cultural performances, concerts, photography exhibitions and a football competition between two African and two local teams.

53. The visual identity for the Decade was developed by the Department of Public Information and OHCHR in the six official languages of the United Nations and is being used by United Nations information centres and OHCHR field offices worldwide. A dedicated, mobile-friendly and accessible website for the Decade went live in the official languages on the day of the launch of the Decade and has since been actively promoted through the communications platforms available to the Department, including social media.

54. The Department also organized a series of related events and activities at Headquarters and worldwide in the context of its "Remember slavery" programme, observed in 2015 under the theme "Women and slavery". The programme is aimed at mobilizing educators to teach about the causes and consequences of the transatlantic slave trade and to communicate the dangers of racism and prejudice. One such event was the unveiling of the permanent memorial in honour of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, *The Ark of Return*, on 25 March at Headquarters. As part of the unveiling, the Department produced a series of videos, radio programmes and feature stories on the memorial in the six official languages, Kiswahili and Portuguese.

55. Other events organized as part of the "Remember slavery" programme included a global student videoconference connecting 500 visiting high school

students at Headquarters with students in Brazil, Trinidad and Tobago and the United States; a cultural and culinary event in New York organized to celebrate the heritage and traditions that enslaved Africans brought to Europe and the Americas; and a briefing for non-governmental organizations on the impact of slavery on women's rights today, which was webcast live. Other related activities included screenings of *They Are We* by Emma Christopher at the American Museum of Natural History and *Selma* by Ava DuVernay at the United Nations and in partnership with the United States Mission to the United Nations and Paramount Pictures, in addition to a round-table discussion entitled "*The General History of Africa*: learning and teaching about African heritage", organized in partnership with UNESCO.

56. The Department also partnered with the Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery in Nantes, France, to organize an exhibit entitled "Women and slavery: telling their stories", which was displayed at the Visitors Lobby at Headquarters. Materials for the United Nations information centres were produced in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

57. Activities were organized by United Nations information centres in close collaboration with the States Members of the Caribbean Community and the African Union to mark the annual observance of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade (25 March).

58. In Argentina, the National Institute to Combat Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism created a national forum for people of African descent and Africans to serve as a space where those communities could raise their concerns. It was also involved in the national household census and worked with the national statistical institute to include a question to self-identify as Afro-Argentinian. In its work on awareness-raising, Argentina has developed specific curricula and teaching material, including a textbook, *Somos Iguales y Diferentes*, that provides a guide for children on preventing discriminatory practices. The Institute has developed relevant radio and television spots. In follow-up to the Decade, Argentina is developing television spots about the history and culture of Afro-Argentinians, promoting recognition of their valuable contribution to society, increasing their visibility and challenging negative stereotypes. Argentina also established 8 November as its national day for Afro-Argentinians and Afro-culture and on 25 July celebrates the International Day of Afro-Latina, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women.

59. On 21 May 2015, Colombia launched the Decade with a national campaign entitled "Time to fight racism". On that day, more than 1 million public servants took an online course intended primarily to raise awareness of Colombian cultural and racial diversity. In addition, the course covered the national legal framework with regard to Afro-Colombians and their history, culture and rich contribution to society. Several public figures were invited to record video messages on equality and non-discrimination that were broadcast nationwide. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights provided a message in which he recalled the unequal treatment before the law, the alarming rates of police violence, the disproportionate recourse to detention and the harsher sentences that people of African descent faced in the justice system, in addition to the low level of political participation and the fact that an intolerable number of people of African descent lacked their fundamental right to development. Statements were also provided by world-famous personalities such as Kofi Annan, renowned footballers from the

national team, actors, actresses, children and other personalities. A second course aimed at public officials is envisaged and will be compulsory for recruitment to government positions.

60. Colombia is developing a national action plan for the implementation of the Decade. Afro-Colombians will be involved and consulted in the process. The plan will contain a comprehensive strategy and specific policies for the betterment of Afro-Colombian lives. To regularly assess the situation of people of African descent and the impact of the national policies, Colombia will collect, compile and analyse data on the situation of Afro-Colombians with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank and the United States Agency for International Development. Colombia reaffirmed its commitment with regard to an upcoming conference for people of African descent for the Latin American and Caribbean region and a possible declaration on the promotion and protection of the human rights of people of African descent.

61. Cuba reported on its work to promote respect for the culture, identity, history and heritage of people of African descent. It described measures taken to include, in its education curricula at all levels, the history of Africa, the transatlantic slave trade, slavery and the struggle for its abolition, the recognition of people of African descent as national heroes and the contemporary history of people of African descent. It also reported on research on past and present conditions of people of African descent, the promotion of literature and other artistic expressions by Afro-Cuban artists, its work through museums, in particular the Museum of the Slave Route, its support for audiovisual and radio programmes to raise awareness of the existence of racism and racial discrimination and promote mutual understanding. Cuba also reported that, taking advantage of the celebrations to mark the five-hundredth anniversary of the founding of Santiago de Cuba, several activities had been conducted in July 2015 to acknowledge and recognize the contribution of people of African descent to the construction of Cuban national identity.

62. Peru reported that the Ministry of Culture was the government body responsible for the implementation of the activities in the framework of the Decade. It indicated that, in the coming months, it would adopt a national development action plan for Afro-Peruvians, aimed at remedying disparities in the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms affecting Afro-Peruvians and protecting them from further discrimination. Peru reported that such disparities and de facto inequalities resulted from the circumstances of history that continued to deny Afro-Peruvians the full enjoyment of human rights. In that regard, the plan, together with other policies, would contribute to correcting current disparities and prevent further imbalances from arising. The plan would be in line with other national plans, including on strategic development and human rights. It would encompass all national policies addressed to Afro-Peruvians so as to implement commitments made by the Government in the framework of the Decade, the Organization of American States and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. Among the activities to give visibility to Afro-Peruvians, a public launch of the Decade was envisaged with the presence of ministers, diplomats, representatives of development institutions, the United Nations and members of civil society, including Afro-Peruvians. In addition, seminars and round tables on challenges facing Peru in the implementation of the Decade and the historic path and current situation of Afro-Peruvians would also be organized in 2015. Peru has proclaimed June as Afro-Peruvian Culture Month and 4 June as the Day of Afro-Peruvian

Culture in honour of the poet, journalist and researcher of Afro-Peruvian cultural heritage, Nicomedes Santa Cruz.

63. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reported that, to mark the launch of the Decade, the Institute of the Black World 21st Century, in collaboration with the Caribbean Reparations Commission, had hosted an international reparations summit in New York in April 2015.

C. Strengthen national, regional and international action and cooperation in relation to the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights by people of African descent and their full and equal participation in all aspects of society

64. OHCHR is working closely with United Nations bodies, in particular the Department of Public Information and UNESCO, and other stakeholders to implement the aims and objectives of the Decade effectively.

65. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as coordinator of the Decade, is seeking to implement this part of the programme through the promotion of inter-agency cooperation and the creation of opportunities for greater direct contact between representatives of people of African descent and the United Nations system. He is making use of the United Nations network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities to incorporate issues pertaining to people of African descent into the work of the United Nations system. The network's action plan contains initiatives to support United Nations work to promote and protect the rights of people of African descent.

66. The Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent was directly involved in the development of the programme of activities and the theme for the Decade. The Working Group has continued to actively promote and participate in activities to assist stakeholders (see A/70/309).

67. The Working Group also plays a vital role in facilitating and encouraging inter-agency cooperation. On 19 November 2014, at the seventh meeting of the United Nations network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities, the Chair of the Working Group provided a briefing on the Decade. She emphasized the importance of the Decade and encouraged the members of the network to use the Decade to accord priority to activities to promote and protect the rights of people of African descent. It was noted that the themes of the Decade — justice, recognition and development — reflected some of the focus areas of the network in implementing the guidance note of the Secretary-General on racial discrimination and protection of minorities, in particular with a view to combating racial discrimination, including in relation to people of African descent. In that regard, the members of the network agreed to increase collaboration around the activities relating to the Decade and to bring awareness and increased action during the Decade.

68. A forum for people of African descent has been established as part of the programme of activities to serve as a consultation mechanism, to be provided by one of the existing Durban follow-up mechanisms such as the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent or the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

The Human Rights Council is expected to take action and provide guidance on the Forum's format and modalities.

69. In anticipation of the discussion by the Human Rights Council, the coordinator of the Decade issued a call for submissions and invited interested stakeholders, individuals, groups and organizations to submit information on their vision for the Forum. The submissions received included views on the aims and objectives of the Forum, its thematic focus, format and agenda and how to ensure wide participation. OHCHR transmitted a compilation of the submissions received to Member States for consideration during their consultations.

70. OHCHR is organizing the first regional meeting on the Decade for Latin America and the Caribbean. It will be held in Brazil at the end of 2015. OHCHR wishes to express its appreciation to the Government of Brazil for hosting the meeting. The main objective will be to identify trends, priorities and obstacles at the national and regional levels and to formulate specific recommendations for action to be carried out to combat the racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance faced by people of African descent.

71. Regional cooperation is also important. OHCHR is working actively with the European Network of Equality Bodies and the Ibero-American Network of Agencies and Organizations against Discrimination. In May 2015, at the fourth meeting of the Ibero-American Network, held in Guatemala, OHCHR provided a briefing on the Decade and the action to be taken by equality bodies. Follow-up initiatives are foreseen, including support from OHCHR for a research competition on the human rights situation of people of African descent in Ibero-America.

72. At the bilateral level, under a joint action plan to eliminate racial and ethnic discrimination and promote equality, the Governments of Brazil and the United States are to collaborate in promoting cooperation, understanding and exchange of information to eliminate racial and ethnic discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all. Themes for cooperation include education, equal access to employment and economic opportunities, equal protection of the law, racial disparities in health and environmental justice.

III. Trust Fund for the Programme for the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination

73. The Secretary-General established the Trust Fund for the Programme for the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination in 1973 as a financial mechanism to implement the activities planned in the context of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (1973-1982). It was also used to fund activities during the second and third decades (1983-1992 and 1994-2003) and to cover expenditure relating to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, in 2001, and the Durban Review Conference, in 2009. Given that no further activities were planned under the Trust Fund, no new contributions were received after 2009 and all pending obligations were fulfilled, the Trust Fund was closed in 2014.

74. To secure the successful implementation of the activities of the Decade, OHCHR is working on its cost plan, which will contain a specific project devoted to activities relating to the Decade (under paragraph 18 of resolution 68/151). It will

be used to seek the support of all Member States. Any contributions received would be placed in an earmarked special fund or specific project for those activities and used exclusively for that purpose.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

75. **The first year of the Decade has brought promising and positive results with regard to the goal of promoting greater knowledge of and respect for the heritage, culture and contribution of people of African descent to the development of societies. According to the information available, however, the fundamental issues of discrimination in the administration of justice, in particular racial profiling, and equal access to economic, social and cultural rights and effective participation remain among the main challenges faced by States.**

76. **As a first step in tackling those challenges, the United Nations, especially OHCHR, the Department of Public Information and UNESCO, and several States have launched campaigns to inform the public of the history, contributions, challenges, contemporary experiences and situation of the human rights of people of African descent.**

77. **At the operational level, pilot initiatives for dialogue and the promotion of issues pertaining to people of African descent have been established at the national, regional and international levels. Member States have reported on initiatives targeting people of African descent.**

78. **In view of the progress and challenges identified during the first year of the Decade, the following recommendations are made:**

(a) **To attain the goal and objectives set for the Decade, Member States should take specific steps to recognize people of African descent in their countries;**

(b) **States should establish national legislative frameworks for people of African descent and develop institutional policies and mechanisms so as to engage effectively on their issues, taking as a point of reference the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination;**

(c) **Continuing efforts should be made by Member States and international organizations, including the United Nations, for the full application and operationalization of the recommendations contained in the programme of activities;**

(d) **OHCHR should strengthen its analysis and development of studies in order to deepen knowledge of the human rights situation of people of African descent;**

(e) **All relevant stakeholders should contribute generously to the OHCHR special fund or specific project established for the activities of the Decade.**